

Multi-Agency Wildfire Rehab and Recovery Working Group



September 2, 2008

As you know, wildfires and fighting wildfires damage both property and natural resources - but while suppression damage is assessed and paid for by the agency, or agencies, fighting the fire, non-suppression wildfire damage is the responsibility of the affected individual landowners. Government agencies and large industrial landowners can assess the non-suppression damage on their lands, develop mitigations, and cover the cost of implementing them, but often private landowners have neither the technical expertise to assess damage to their land nor the money to pay for non-suppression damage mitigations such as replacing burned fencing, reseeding burned lands, or preventing erosion, to name a few.

The agencies and organizations whose logos are on this page manage programs that help private landowners with this problem. In 2006 they formed the Statewide Multi-Agency Wildfire Rehab and Recovery Working Group to plan and develop ways in which they can collectively do a more effective and efficient job of assisting private landowners with non-suppression wildfire damage. These service providers and others all offer some, but generally different, information/education and technical/financial assistance programs, with each program having its own standards, rules and processes. Understanding the differing programs and figuring out which will best help them can be confusing and stressful for impacted landowners, and an inequitable distribution of services can result. The Working Group wanted to find a way for Service Providers to work together to get available assistance to impacted landowners in an efficient, effective, and fair manner.

The result of that effort is a Multi-Agency MOU that recommends the formation of locally-based, generally by county, Local Wildfire Rehabilitation and Recovery Response Teams or Local Implementation Teams. These teams would meet during the winter to plan a coordinated response should a large wildfire occur within their area. You can review this MOU and other Multi-Agency rehab information on the web at <http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry> and then clicking on the Montana Multi-Agency Wildfire Rehab link.

To help local groups develop these Local Implementation Teams, the Working Group has created an informative DVD, which is enclosed in the attached brochure. All the signatories' field offices will receive a copy of this DVD, which they can view and then meet with local partners to review it together and determine who, locally, can best implement its concept to best meet local needs. You can read the DVD's narration and additional information at the web site noted above.

If you would like assistance or further information, you may contact one of the Working Group members listed on the back DVD brochure.

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Attachment



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Ravalli County Commissioners

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